



# FACT SHEET

USAF Fact Sheet  
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## Nellis Air Force Base



### Mission

Nellis Air Force Base, a part of the United State's Air Force's Air Combat Command, is located approximately eight miles northeast of Las Vegas, Nev. The base itself covers more than 14,000 acres, while the total land area occupied by Nellis and its restricted ranges is about 5,000 square miles. An additional 7,700 miles of airspace north and east of the restricted ranges are also available for military flight operations.

Nellis is a major focal point for advanced combat aviation training. Its mission is accomplished through an array of aircraft, including fighters, bombers, refuelers, and aircraft used for transport, close-air-support, command-and-control and combat search-and-rescue. The Nellis work force of about 9,500 military and civilians makes it one of

the largest single employers in Southern Nevada. The total military population numbers more than 40,000, including family members and military retirees in the area.

## **Background**

Nellis began as the Las Vegas Army Air Base, hosting the Army Air Corps Flexible Gunnery School in 1941, initially training B-17 gunners. During the height of World War II, more than 600 B-17 gunners and 215 co-pilots graduated from the school every five weeks. In March 1945 the B-17 gunnery program gave way to crew training for the new B-29. Following the end of the war, the base was placed on temporary standby status, finally closing in January 1947.

The base was reopened in 1949 and renamed the next year in honor of Lieutenant William Harrell Nellis, a Nevada resident killed in action Dec. 27, 1944, on his 70<sup>th</sup> P-47 combat mission over Luxembourg.

Today, units at Nellis continue to provide training for composite strike forces that include every type of aircraft in the U.S. Air Force inventory, along with air and ground units of the Army, Navy, Marines and air units from allied nations. Nellis is also responsible for operational test and evaluation, as well as tactics development

The 57<sup>th</sup> Wing is the operational element of the center. The wing's major units are the 57<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 57<sup>th</sup> Logistics Group, U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron (The Thunderbirds), U.S. Air Force Weapons School, 66<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron, 11<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron, 15<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron, 414<sup>th</sup> Combat Training Squadron (Red Flag), 547<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Squadron and the 549<sup>th</sup> combat Training Squadron (Air Warrior). Other major units are the 99<sup>th</sup> Air Base Wing, 99<sup>th</sup> Support Group, 99<sup>th</sup> Medical Group and the 53<sup>rd</sup> Wing (located at Eglin AFB, Fla.). The Range Management Office under the Air Warfare Center is responsible for the Nevada Test and Training Range.

The 99<sup>th</sup> Support Group provides command guidance for all support agencies located at Nellis or associated with the center. The group provides a wide array of services including transportation, supply, services, contracting, civil engineering, security police, mission support and communications.

The 99<sup>th</sup> Medical Group is divided into aerospace medicine, hospital services, dental services and nursing services. Mike O'Callaghan Federal Hospital has 119 beds and is operated jointly with the Veterans' Administration.

Tenant units at Nellis include the Defense Commissary Agency; 820<sup>th</sup> Red Horse Squadron; Field Training Detachment 918, Air Force Audit Agency; 39<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Squadron; and the 896<sup>th</sup> Munitions Squadron. Other tenant units include the Area Defense Counsel; Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office; Detachment 8, Air Combat Command Training Supply Squadron; Detachment 206, Air Force Office of Special Investigations; and the Federal Prison Camp.

**(Current as of January 2001)**